

In less than four weeks a special election will be held to ask voters to accept or reject the Town Council's proposal to site a highway garage facility (the "Barn") adjacent to the Newport Bridge. The total cost to construct the barn at the bridge location, including purchase of approximately 6,000 square feet of state property, will amount to \$1.5 million which will be financed by a town bond.

Given the lengthy and sometimes fractious history of the island's barn debate, it is important that voters have all available information to make an educated choice about the merits of this proposal. The purpose of this column is to assist with this decision by presenting the components of the Bridge Highway Garage proposal. I will also try to provide perspective about some of the implications of the decision voters are tasked with making on Aug. 28.

Features of the bridge Site

Location: The barn would be located between the Newport Bridge and the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The building will begin just 35 feet north of the edge of the bridge structure. Design plans, to be released next week, will show that the building footprint will occupy a 60- by 200-foot area with equal space for pavement in front. The full facility will, therefore, extend 120-feet from the rear edge toward the treatment plant and will run 200-feet parallel to the bridge.

To those familiar with the area, the front of the garage will end just before the existing dirt path, which is close to the bridge and leads into the site from Freebody Drive. The boundary of the proposed paved area ends across from the south side of the driveway into the time-share condominiums.



From the Town Administrator

By Bruce Keiser

Elevations: The ridge line of the shallow pitched roof is 23-feet from ground elevation and 18-feet at the gutters. By contrast the bridge road surface is approximately 40-feet higher than the elevation of Bayview and Freebody Drives.

Clearing of vegetation

The limits of clearing the buffer between the bridge and the treatment plant will match the approximate footprint of the building and the paved area. Driveway access will be through the treatment plant with a 20-foot wide paved extension behind the plant to access the garage. Zoning regulations mandate a 50-foot setback from the adjacent Freebody Drive. As a result, a minimum 50-foot wide strip of the existing vegetation along the local road will be maintained.

Building Impacts

Scenic/aesthetic: While the visual impact of the facility is literally "in the eye of the beholder," the siting plan will be based on the premise that the building and associated paved area will be hidden from public view to the maximum extent feasible. Renderings to scale will be published shortly to depict views from several strategic vantage points. From photographs we will provide images from Freebody Drive, different Taylor Point locations, East Shore Road, and from the Newport Bridge.

Based on the site characteristics and building elevations, our goal will be to use the preserved mature vegetation to provide a dense buffer that will limit exposure of the facility from ground level view. From the bridge, car passengers will likely see the garage's metal roof through the railings and a part of the yard. It is worth noting that the facility operations plan will include requirements to control the yard storage and use to promote proper and appropriate site management.

In accord with Jamestown planning regulations, the building and site design will be determined through the site plan review process by the Planning Commission. The public will have opportunity for input throughout this process of approval. Preliminary design discussions suggest that the building façade treatment should be wood cedar siding. This look would conform to the planned modernization of the wastewater facility, which will include siding the plant in cedar.

Environmental

Soil testing has been performed on both the town portion of the building site and the parcel to be conveyed by the RI Turnpike and Bridge Authority. Lead is the only contaminant that was discovered. There are no other documented findings of any other pollutants on the site. In discussion with environmental consultants and the DEM, the lead readings are low to moderate. Remediation will entail scraping the soil cover (a necessary component of the site preparation for the building slab and paving) and disposal at an off-site location.

Water and sewer utilities are easily accessible to service the garage. The availability of public water

will provide ample supply for basic needs, as well as washing of vehicles and fire suppression. Sewer service will control any facility-related environmental impacts.

Storm water discharge will be managed and treated with a detention pond developed down-slope from the aeration tanks.

Other issues

The operational impacts of a center island location versus the north end are numerous and varied. The criteria used to evaluate

the comparative advantages of the two sites include public safety response, efficiency, and the travel routes and traffic daily impacts of DPW vehicles on local roads. I will address each of these issues in a second column in next week's Press which will also include graphics of the building and site plan and a discussion of the project cost, financing, and tax implications to residents and businesses.

LETTERS

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would have addressed it.

I am told that this is the first time in 45 years that the Jamestown police have tagged vehicles at the Jamestown Striper Club kids fishing derby. Definitely not a good way to say thank you to a club that does so much. A better way to have handled the situation might have been for the police officer to stop to speak to those in charge of the event and ask that cars be moved. I'm sure that an announcement would have been made and the cars would have been moved immediately.

Before the event was over, the spokesman for the club announced that some cars were ticketed. He apologized to those whose cars had been tagged and offered to reimburse each the cost of the ticket which was \$25. I couldn't see my way clear to request reimbursement from a club who had just provided a great time at no cost to us, so I promptly went to the police station and paid my fine.

Many thanks to all of the members of the Jamestown Striper Club for your effort in promoting fishing, supporting clean water and other environmental issues and for the class that you showed in offering to

pay for parking tickets that were issued through no fault of yours. See you at the derby next year.

Anthony B. Simeone
Hull Street

Thanks to the police department

On behalf of the Jamestown Teen Center, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Jamestown Police Department and the Jamestown Police Union (IBPO Local 305) for their sponsorship of the teen center's third annual Six Flags trip on July 10. Not only did they organize and plan the trip, several officers from the department joined us for the day as chaperones, and enjoyed a great summer day at the park with 42 Jamestown teens.

A huge thank you goes out to Angela Deneault, John Areson, Jason Hopkins, Joel Pinocci, Ashley Schipritt, Mark Esposito and especially Karen Catlow for their collaboration on the event. I would also like to thank Stephanie Nocon, Jill Goldstein, and the interim Recreation Director Bill Piva for their enthusiasm and participation in the trip. It was a huge success and everyone had a blast. The teen center is excited to collaborate with the police department in the future.

Melissa Minto
Jamestown Teen Coordinator

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